

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAPE T 00364 111622 Z

73

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

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R 111345 Z MAY 73

FM AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3473

INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CAPE TOWN 364

E. O. 11652: ADS, DECLAS 6/30/73

TAGS: PINT, SF

SUBJ: PROVINCIAL BY- ELECTION SHOWS NO SIGNIFICANT PARTY SHIFT

REF : AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN' S A-18, MAY 7

1. AS ANTICIPATED IN REF MESSAGE, RESULT OF MAY 9 CAPE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL BY- ELECTION IN ALIWAL NORTH CONSTITUENCY SHOWED NO SIGNIFICANT SHIFT BY VOTERS TO EITHER NATIONAL PARTY (NP) OR UNITED PARTY (UP). NATIONALIST CANDIDATE JOHAN GREEF POLLED 4,969 VOTES AGAINST 3,810 FOR UP OPPONENT HANSIE SMITH. NAT MAJORITY OF 1,159 WAS SLIGHTLY LOWER THAN IN COMPARABLE 1970 PROVINCIAL ELECTION (BUT WAS IMPROVEMENT OVER NAT POSITION IN 1970 GENERAL ELECTION IN SAME CONSTITUENCY). RESULT REPRESENTS ONLY MINOR SWING OF 1.6 PERCENT TO OPPOSITION UP. ON ELECTION EVE NP SPOKESMEN HAD PREDICTED MAJORITY OF UP TO 2,000 WHILE UP TALKED HOPEFULLY OF SUBSTANTIALLY IMPROVING ITS SHOWING.

2. PREDICTABLY, SPOKESMEN FOR BOTH PARTIES SAW SILVER LINING IN OUTCOME. UP' S GENERAL SECRETARY SENATOR WILLIAM HORAK DESCRIBED RESULT AS VERY SATISFACTORY AND CLAIMED THAT SEEN IN CONJUNCTION WITH EVERY BY- ELECTION RESULT SINCE 1970 IS SHOWED

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PAGE 02 CAPE T 00364 111622 Z

NP WAS IN DECLINE IN BOTH RURAL AND URBAN AREAS. MYBURGH STREICHER, CAPE LEADER OF PARTY, WAS EVEN MORE OPTIMISTIC. POINTING OUT THAT NP HAD EXPECTED A GREAT VICTORY, HE MAINTAINED THAT SINCE UP HAD REDUCED NP MAJORITY IN A CAPE PLATTELAND (RURAL) SEAT, NATS CANNOT FEEL SAFE ANY MORE. UP ALSO DREW COMFORT FROM PROF. WILLEM KLEYNHANS, POLITICAL SCIENTIST AT UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA, WHO IS REGULAR INTERPRETER OF ELECTION RESULTS. HE FELT THAT IMPROVED UP SHOWING IN BOTH ALIWAL PLATTELAND (RURAL) CONSTITUENCY DESPITE ALL ODDS AGAINST IT, AND IN CITY BY- ELECTION IN UMHLATUZANA LAST MONTH, PROVED ONCE AGAIN THAT SWING TOWARDS UP WAS A NATIONA- WIDE TREND. NAT SPOKESMEN ALSO PROFESSED SATISFACTION WITH RESULT.

3. COMMENT: IN RECENT YEARS SHIFTS IN SA VOTING PATTERN HAVE BEEN AT SUCH GLACIAL PACE THAT EVEN SMALLEST CHANGES RESULT IN OVERBLOWN CLAIMS. THUS EVEN IF KLEYNHANS IS RIGHT IN SEEING SLOW BUT STEADY SHIFT TO UNITED PARTY, THE COMMENT ON ALIWAL NORTH RESULT BY DEFENSE MINISTER P. W. BOTHA, NATIONAL PARTY LEADER IN CAPE, MORE REALISTICALLY SUMS UP OVERALL POSITION OF TWO MAJOR PARTIES AS IT NOW LOOKS FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE. HTE RESULT, HE SAID, " IS CONCLUSIVE PROOF THAT WE (NATIONALISTS) WILL RETAIN POWER FOR MANY YEARS TO COME".
O' NEILL

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